



Pendine Park news

The newsletter of the Pendine Park care organisation

Issue 8



Meriel Andrew from Welsh National Opera sings to Resident Francis Davies.

Opera magic raises the roof

Residents of were treated to a "world class" feast of opera. Members of Welsh National Opera raised the roof after taking to the stage at our Hillbury care home.

More than 50 people from across the Pendine Park packed the chapel to get first class seats.

They enjoyed over an hour of entertainment by two members of WNO's acclaimed Chorus, soprano Meriel Andrew and tenor Simon Buttle.

The duo stopped off at Hillbury en route to The Liverpool Empire where they were appearing the in popular Mozart opera Don Giovanni.

The visit was part of a three-year WNO residency in the town. Now, we have become WNO Community Champions.

Meriel has toured with WNO for eight years. She said the company is committed to reaching out to the community and making opera more accessible.

"We have a certain amount of funding to do this kind of thing. They get so much out of it. Music evokes so many emotions and memories. People who haven't spoken for years will suddenly start to sing. It's amazing."

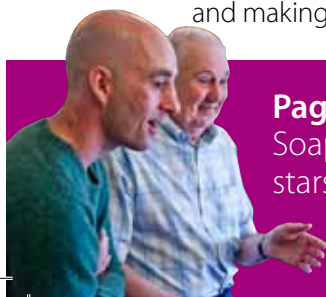
Meriel and Simon sang a string of arias from famous operas, songs from the musicals such as Phantom of the Opera and a trio of Welsh lullabies.

They ended with a rousing rendition of Liverpool Football Club's anthem You'll Never Walk Alone – from the musical Carousel. The singing duo danced with residents and sang directly to them.

Hillbury resident Frances Davies was serenaded by Meriel and Frances' daughter Ann Jones, from Cefn-y-Bedd, found the concert moving.

She said: "She's blind and she's hard of hearing but she seems to have enjoyed the concert. She enjoys being with people and she likes company."

continued on page 2



Page 2
Soap stars



Pages 10&11
Awards special



Page 9
Memories



Page 12
Miracle man

World class feast of opera at Hillbury concert



continued from page 1

Frances adopted Ann from Wrexham Maelor Hospital when she was just two weeks old. Mrs Jones said her mother has been at the home for two and a half years.

She said: "It's wonderful that they've put this on. It's lovely and a lot of the residents like to sing."

Fellow resident Alan Hassall has been at Bryn Bella Care Home, for 12 months. He said the concert was "fantastic."

"I really enjoyed it. In all my life I've never listened to Opera and I'll buy a couple of CDs now," the former computer programmer said.

Christine Jones, 67 added "I joined in and sang the songs it really was unbelievable. It was lovely to see something different. We'd been really looking forward to it."

Simon Buttle has been with Welsh National Opera for two years. He said the concert was a first for him but he thoroughly enjoyed it.

"When we're on stage we don't see the audience. It's great to see who you're singing to. To be able to get down on your knee and see the reaction on their face is lovely."

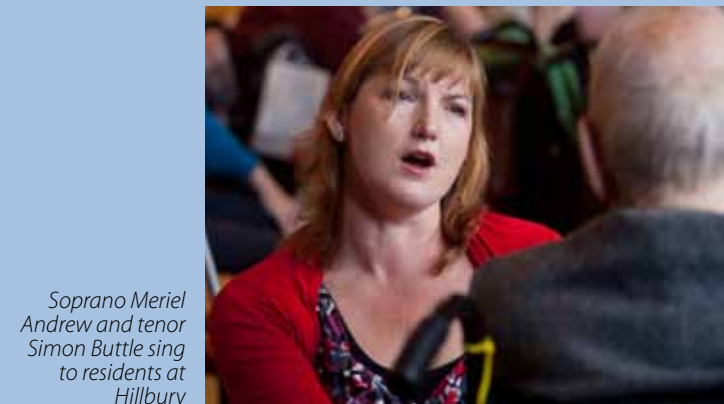
The concert was organised by Sarah Edwards, Pendine Park's Artist in Residence for the past 16 years. She hailed the event a "huge success".

"They were enraptured; everyone was caught in the moment. We have people here with complex conditions such as dementia but music can have a connection. We feel the arts play a role in enhancing peoples' lives.

"Coming into a care home is not the end it's a new start. We want the best quality of life for our residents". Sarah hopes Welsh National Opera will return for another curtain call in the

future.

Mario Kreft MBE, the opera loving proprietor of Pendine Park, added: "I think it's been wonderful for world class singers like Meriel and Simon to spend time with our residents and create something that was truly magical."



Soprano Meriel Andrew and tenor Simon Buttle sing to residents at Hillbury

Our residents become soap stars

The lives of our residents are being turned into a soap opera. Welsh National Opera has launched an ambitious programme to create nine episodes which will become an opera about the town and people of Wrexham, thanks to backing from organisations like Pendine Park.

Writer Alan Harris, librettist for WNO, arrived at Bryn Bella with his camera team to record the first workshop interviews with residents.

Alan used the stories, reminiscences and memories from Bryn Bella to help create a five minute opera, one of nine to be known as Nine Stories High, which will be performed live in Wrexham.

Pendine Park has had an artist in residence for 15 years and our innovative collaboration with the Hallé orchestra has won awards.

Resident Christine Jones told how she married a village policeman nearly 50 years ago, only for most of the village to turn out and watch the wedding.

With little money and no prospect of a honeymoon, she recalled a friend of her parents giving them an envelope with £5 ("a lot of money in those days") and a key – which opened a caravan in Blackpool which they were to use for their honeymoon.

Artist in Residence Sarah Edwards said: "We wanted to give residents a new experience to give them the opportunity to tell their stories and their experiences in Wrexham, and they have done that and really enjoyed it.

Resident Alan Hassall, 65, said: "You get a lot of freedom here and excellent staff who really care for everyone in every way possible, and you get the benefits of all these activities."



Writer Alan Harris with residents, from left, Mark Cartwright, Christine Jones and Sandra Morris.



New world opens for Suzanne

Pendine Park is opening up a whole new world for a blind resident.

Suzanne Lewis, who lives in Highfield, completely lost her sight more than 10 years ago, but, for a number of reasons, had never learnt to read Braille.

When Gerry Humphreys, the Activities Officer, found out, she set about putting it right and now Suzanne is taking Braille classes every week.

"It will open up a lot of doors for Suzanne and help make her a lot more independent," said Gerry.

Suzanne, who has spina bifida and has to use a wheelchair, had to endure countless trips to hospital for various operations and says pressure on her brain caused her eyesight to start failing.

"I lost my sight completely in 2001, it was pretty devastating, I didn't cope too well at first, always bumping into things. I couldn't see to cut up my own food. Now I just take every day as it comes."

"It's great here, everyone is friendly and they all talk to you, even if I get a flat I hope I can come back here sometimes," said Suzanne.

Gerry added: "When Suzanne said she had never had the opportunity to learn Braille I thought 'right we can do something about that' so I looked around and found a local centre where I could take Suzanne to learn Braille.

"We go every Tuesday morning for lessons with Keith Brown at Vision Support. It seems very difficult but she has been wonderful and can already identify about seven letters."

Mario named as UK Care Personality of the Year

The proprietor of Pendine Park has won a major UK award in a remarkable hat-trick of honours.

Mario Kreft MBE, who is also the Chair of Care Forum Wales, has been named as the UK's Care Personality of the Year.

The accolade was bestowed during a glittering ceremony at the London Hilton Metropole Hotel hosted by TV personality John Sergeant, the former Political Editor of ITN.

Mario is the first person from Wales to receive the prestigious award from Caring Times magazine.

It came the day after he was named the Care Personality of the Year in Wales at the UK Over 50s Housing Weekly Awards at Central Hall Westminster, across the road from the Houses of Parliament in London.

Completing the treble was a Recognition of Achievement Award from the Welsh Government in recognition of his innovative work. It was presented by First Minister Carwyn Jones during a ceremony at Ruthin Castle.

Among the first to congratulate Mario was Wrexham AM Lesley Griffiths, who is also the Health Minister in Wales.

She said: "I am delighted that Mario has been honoured with this magnificent hat-trick of awards."

"This recognition for all his pioneering work and dedication for more than 25 years is richly deserved."

"Mario leads by example and is an eloquent and effective champion for social care in Wales."

"At the same time, he is lucky to have fantastic support from his colleagues at Pendine Park and Care Forum Wales while his wife, Gill, is his rock."

The sentiment was echoed by the Deputy Minister for

Health and Social Services, Gwenda Thomas.

She said: "It shows that Care Forum Wales is a really important organisation in Wales and beyond and not only that, it's part of a wider partnership taking care forward into the next decade and Mario's involvement has shown the importance of the private care sector in that partnership."

"Wales can claim to be a country of firsts in many things such as the appointment of an Older People's Commissioner but this is an example of Mario in person bringing the award for the first time to Wales and it's the culmination of the good work he has led in Wales over many years."

Last year Mario was awarded the MBE as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours in recognition of his services to social care.

One of his proudest achievements was founding the Wales Care Awards which celebrates the skill and dedication of the unsung heroes and heroines of social care.

The MBE coincided with the 25th anniversary of Pendine Park and the opening of a new centre of excellence, called Bodlondeb (place of contentment) to look after people with dementia at their main site in Wrexham.

It was officially opened by the First Minister who described Bodlondeb as "a wonderful place".

Mario said: "These awards are also recognition for the fantastic work done by the dedicated staff of Pendine Park and Care Forum Wales and I have accepted them gladly on that basis."



Mario Kreft with John Sergeant, left and Ted Smith of European Care at the awards ceremony.



Home opening is poignant for Mario

The opening of a new unit to look after people with dementia and other mental health problems was a poignant occasion for Pendine Park proprietor Mario Kreft.

It took place 26 years to the day that his beloved grandmother, Mrs Rene Warburton, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease, passed away in a care home.

According to Mario, it was the need to find suitable care for his grandmother that inspired him to become involved in the care sector.

The new Plas Gwyn dementia unit at Hillbury House, in Hillbury Road, was officially opened by the Mayor of Wrexham, Cllr Ian Roberts, accompanied by the Mayoress, his wife, Hilary.

Cllr Roberts said: "I was very pleased to be invited to officially open Plas Gwyn."

"I have been to Hillbury on numerous occasions. It feels like home and I'm sure it feels like home to the people who live here now. The staff are extremely pleasant and there is a lovely atmosphere."

"The standards in the new unit are excellent and I'm sure the care that they provide here is second to none."

"There are a lot of people living a lot longer and obviously dementia comes on which means that more and more care is needed whether that is in the community or in a residential setting."

Last year the First Minister Carwyn Jones officially opened

Bodlondeb, Pendine Park's new centre of excellence for people with dementia at their site in Summerhill Road. Bodlondeb was named after Mario's grandparents' home in Rhyl.

Pendine Park is the hub for a range of services catering for the whole spectrum of care needs.

Our domiciliary arm, Independent Living, supports people in their own homes and we can also offer respite care and longer term residential, nursing and EMI care in our award-winning homes.

Free training is available for family carers at our in-house Teaching Care Centre.

According to Mario, who was awarded an MBE for his contribution to social care in Wales, the opening of Plas Gwyn was also a special day.

He said: "It's remarkable that we should be opening an EMI residential unit 26 years to the day that I lost my grandmother in an EMI residential unit. It is quite poignant really."

"It's nearly 30 years ago since we've as a family found that we really did need to look for more support than we were able to give and I continue to be inspired by my grandmother."

"We really want to provide the best services that we can. It's something that you have to keep working at, trying to improve all the time."

"The EMI residential unit is about responding to the needs of the community."



Penybryn rocks!

Penybryn proved that being in a care home does not prevent you having a really rocking good time.

When rock guitarist Dan Peeling's mum heard that Penybryn residents would welcome some original entertainment, Dan and fellow band members of Luminova were only too happy to oblige. Pendine Park activities manager Gerry Humphreys said: "The lads were very loud, but very good! It was a real tonic for the residents who really enjoyed the concert."

Inspirational Tracey leads by example

A new generation of care practitioners is being inspired by the story of Tracey Evans.

Tracey, the manager of Smartcare, started out as a YTS trainee at the award-winning Pendine Park care organisation.

Twenty five years on and her proteges were celebrating at a glittering award ceremony in Wrexham after completing their National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

No fewer than 28 members of Pendine Park's staff passed their NVQ level Two or NVQ level Three qualifications.

And a further 21 care practitioners working at other care homes across the region passed their NVQ qualifications at Wrexham-based Smartcare, which is Pendine Park's training arm.

Wrexham mayor Cllr Ian Roberts was on hand to congratulate the successful learners and hand them their diplomas.

Smartcare Teaching Care Centre manager, Tracey Evans, explained that this is the third year the award ceremony has taken place and standards continue to improve.

She said: "Smartcare was set up 10 years ago by Pendine Park proprietors Mario Kreft MBE and his wife Gill, after they struggled to find somewhere to train staff to the highest possible standard."

Tracey, who began her career at Pendine Park 25 years ago as a YTS Care Practitioner before working her way up to becoming manager of Pendine Park's Gwern Alyn care home and eventually manager of Smartcare, added that the vision for Pendine Park remains unchanged.

She said: "We treat our clients in the best way we can by always aiming to provide the best possible care with dignity and respect.

"We are teaching a recognised work-based learning qualification in social care which in my view is second



to none. However, we have to thank our brilliant training centre staff. They are dedicated and committed to our learners and their profession."

Kathryn Wing, of Cardiff-based Associated Community Training Quality Co-ordinator, said: "Smartcare is one of the leading providers of training within the care sector in North Wales and in particular the

Wrexham region. Smartcare continues to out perform and consistently leads the way in care sector training."

Cllr Ian Roberts said: "Pendine Park has a reputation, richly deserved I might add, as a leading provider of care within the Wrexham area and the wider North Wales community.

"We should all be very proud to have a care organisation such as Pendine Park here in Wrexham."

Happy Dave wins by a smile



Dave Lewis has a truly winning smile.

Dave, who works for our home care specialists Independent Living, has been crowned a champion smiler.

The annual Smile Awards, sponsored by Barclays Bank were organised by our training company, Smartcare.

The aim is to reward staff who go that extra mile in making a difference to the everyday lives of its residents and clients who live in their own homes.

Smartcare Teaching Care Centre manager Tracey Evans says clients, their relatives and staff were able to nominate who they thought should win the award.

She said: "We wanted to recognise those members of staff who not just walk about happy and smiling all day themselves but bring a smile to the faces of our clients too.

"Each one of our care homes as well as our Independent Living and support services staff were eligible for the award.

"There is an award and runner-up for each unit and an overall top smiler award. We see this is a very important initiative and wanted to recognise the often missed hard work of our staff in brightening up each day for our clients."

Ton up celebrations for Doris and George

Two of our residents celebrated their 100th birthdays in style.

Birthday girl Doris Lester enjoyed a glass of sherry and a game of dominoes.

She also received a telegram from the Queen at our Gwern Alyn Care Home where she is now a resident.

Meanwhile, George Pemberton entertained guests at his party with a rousing song and poetry he'd learnt as a schoolboy in 1921.

More than 30 people gathered at the Hillbury Care Home, in Wrexham, to celebrate the big day as George gave an energetic rendition of "There's a Hole in my Bucket".

Doris, who only moved into Gwern Alyn four years ago at the age of 96, was paid a birthday visit by the Mayor of Wrexham, Councillor Ian Roberts, who wisely declined the offer of a game of dominoes – Doris rarely loses.

He said it was a privilege to meet her and added: "I am delighted to have been able to visit Gwern Alyn House to celebrate Doris' 100th birthday and to be welcomed by such a wonderful smile.

The Manager of Gwern Alyn, Mildred Heyward, who has herself clocked up an amazing 51 years' in nursing, says Doris is a

wonderful and well-loved resident.

She said: "She is a remarkable lady who still loves to play dominoes and cards and invariably wins!

"She is quiet and unassuming but enjoys life to the full here at Gwern Alyn."



Doris Lester celebrates her 100th birthday with, from left, Mayoress Hilary Roberts, son in law Fred Woolnough, Gwern Alyn Manager Mildred Heyward and Mayor of Wrexham Cllr Ian Roberts.

Doris and her late husband, Edward, moved to Wrexham more than 25 years ago to be closer to their daughter, Jackie, who has since sadly passed away but Jackie's husband, Alfred Woolnough, still visits her regularly and says she is a wonderful lady.

He said: "She really enjoys Gwern Alyn. She's warm, safe and has the best possible care. The staff are absolutely brilliant and I know she is very content."

George puts his long life down to the fact he saw sense and stopped smoking after he realised how bad it was for his health.

Son Keith Robert Pemberton, 67, said: "He's as fit as a fiddle. He enjoys living at Hillbury Care Home and enjoyed having his former neighbours and friends along for his birthday party.

"The staff at Hillbury have been first class and he has his mobility scooter to get around on"

Manager of Hillbury Care Home, Cindy Clutton, said: "George is an inspiration to us all at Hillbury as he still enjoys singing."

Cllr Ian Robert, also attend George's birthday party and said: "It has been a privilege to meet George and celebrate his 100th birthday.

"It's always a pleasure to visit Hillbury which has a fantastic family atmosphere."



George Pemberton celebrates his 100th birthday with the Mayor and Mayoress of Wrexham Cllr Ian Roberts and Mrs Hilary Roberts with manager Cindy Clutton

New role for care inspectors' boss

We have made a key appointment to strengthen our management team.

Pendine Park has recruited Gill Hughes, formerly team manager of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in North Wales, as their Responsible Individual to promote clinical excellence.

Gill, from Mynydd Isa, already knows a great deal about Pendine Park from her previous job and is looking forward immensely to her new role.

She trained originally as a State Registered Nurse and worked at Clatterbridge Hospital before becoming a District Nurse in the Wrexham area. In 1995, she was appointed as a Nursing Homes Inspector with the then Clwyd Health Authority.

She transferred to the Care Standards Inspectorate Wales in 2002 when the Welsh Assembly Government took over responsibility for registering and inspecting care homes.

Gill said: "I have managed a team of nine inspectors covering North Wales and was responsible for all the regulatory decisions that went on there."

"I registered all the homes in Pendine Park apart from Cae Bryn so I was instrumental in them gaining their license to operate."

"Pendine Park is a caring environment that is not driven by profit – it is driven by quality and standards."

"Pendine Park provides a benchmark in terms of quality. I don't think people understand what structures they have in place to provide support and develop their staff."

"In relation to training and personal development, Pendine Park is the gold standard – that's vitally important because that is reflected in the quality of the care and the confidence of the staff."

"My philosophy is in promoting high standards of care and I will not accept anything less – which is also the ethos of Pendine Park."

Pendine Park proprietor Mario Kreft is delighted that Gill has joined the organisation.

He said: "She will bring a wealth of experience and ability which will help Pendine Park continue to improve the care and support we provide to our clients."



Going for gold with pioneering care

We are the first in independent care organisation in Wales to implement a ground-breaking "gold standard".

It's hoped that many others will follow the example of our Highfield nursing home.

The Gold Standards Framework in care homes training programme was developed in England in primary care for GPs and District Nursing teams.

It has been shown to greatly benefit patients, families and staff by improving the organisation and quality of care provided.

Highfield is the first home in Wales to sign up for the current programme.

The aim is to promote quality of life for care home residents from the day to the end of their lives.

Theresa Richards, the GSF Facilitator, is also a Macmillan Nurse working with the Specialist Palliative Care Team at the University Health Board.

She said: "The GSF looks at providing best quality care for residents from the time they come in to the care home until the time they are very poorly to ensure that they get the best standard of care."

"A crucial part of the training is working with residents and their families to establish what kind of care they want and where they want it."

"Their preferences are then documented to help staff deliver the care residents want."

"It could be something as simple as wanting their dog to come in to see them if they are very poorly or maybe they prefer to have the light left on at night or have a shower

instead of a bath.

"Residents may wish to remain in the home if they become very poorly. This programme gives care home staff the tools to enable that to happen – so that they can stay in their preferred place of care."

"The comprehensive programme takes up to a year to complete and includes all staff in a home, including housekeepers and cooks."

Once the training is complete and everything is in place, Highfield can apply for accreditation to receive a Quality Hallmark Award and be recognised as a Gold home.

Gill Hughes, Pendine Park's Responsible Individual who promotes clinical excellence within the organisation, is extremely keen about the initiative.

She said: "The GSF will give us a better understanding of the wishes of residents throughout their time here."

"This is about facilitating freedom of choice. If they want to do something special we will try and accommodate them - if they want to go to a football match we would try and take them to one."

"It fits in perfectly with what we are trying to achieve with Smartcare, our in-house Teaching Care Centre."

"Our aim is to roll out the Gold Standards Framework to all of our care homes so that we can continue to improve the experience of our residents."

Pendine Park's Activities Manager, Gerry Humphreys, added: "This is about our constant quest to raise standards. Pendine Park's standards are extremely high anyway but we are always aiming to raise the bar."

Smart move for top trainer

Our award-winning teaching care centre has appointed one of Wales' top trainers.

Anita Curley, herself a 'Gold medalist' at the Wales Care Awards, has been appointed head of workforce development at our training centre, Smartcare.

Mother-of-two Anita, from Kinmel Bay, is an approved Royal College of Nursing learning rep.

As well as providing in-house training for Pendine's own staff, Smartcare also offers innovative courses in personal development, supervisory, mandatory and regulatory training, for the hundreds of other care workers employed in the private sector.

Anita, who is chairwoman of the RCN's North Wales learning reps' group, said: "I will be looking at all aspects of workforce development, both statutory and non-statutory, carrying out research and preparing bespoke training packages to meet specific

requirements."

Anita has also had experience of running her own training company and writing distance learning packages.

Last year Anita was among the winners at the Wales Care Awards, organised by Care Forum Wales, to highlight exceptional practice in the caring profession.

She was nominated in the category for commitment to training and workforce development and was presented with a gold award at a ceremony in Cardiff City Hall.

Pendine Park proprietor Mario Kreft said: "Anita is one of the most respected figures within in care sector in Wales and we are naturally delighted that she has taken on this new role."

"She has tremendous ability and experience and I am sure she will be a great asset to Pendine Park and other organisations who rely on us to provide first class training opportunities."



Memories are made of this for residents



An ambitious scheme to unlock the memories of dementia sufferers is proving so successful it will be expanded into other care homes.

Sarah Edwards, artist in residence at Pendine Park has found 'memory boards' are helping clients, their families and staff at Bodlondeb, a home for those with dementia.

But Sarah believes they can be put to use in all our homes, giving residents a personalised focal point which highlights important moments from their lives.

And she hopes her next big project will be to prepare personalised music CDs for each resident.

The project was launched in Bodlondeb, the award-winning centre of excellence for people with dementia that was officially opened by First Minister Carwyn Jones last year.

Bodlondeb is also pioneering an innovative musical collaboration with the world-famous Hallé orchestra.

Pendine Park's long-standing partnership with the Hallé has been honoured twice in three years at the annual Arts and Business Cymru Awards.

Sarah said: "We started the memory boards, which are A3 size and they contain a collection of images which mean something to the person, something from their lives, perhaps a wedding or other significant occasions."

"There is a twofold purpose, it helps the resident identify their bedroom by having pictures of familiar places or faces on their bedroom door. It is also great for memory and reminiscences and gives a sense of who that person is."

"We are all about trying to create a certain quality of life for residents and these boards create a point of interest which can give staff something to talk to them about. Even if it just raises a smile you have achieved something."

"The other project I have in mind for the future is a music CD. Even the little things like putting a favourite piece of music on when a person is getting up in the morning can have an impact on their mood for the rest of the day."

An excellent night for award-winning Ann



Ann Chapman with residents Campbell Roberts and Joe McChrystal.

"When an individual suffers with enduring mental health problems it is much harder to find suitable, fit for purpose accommodation and care.

"The eight units are small which allows individuals to experience a more normal lifestyle.

"We see each new day as an opportunity to try something new and help people to grow in self esteem. It's fantastic because this home is so different and we can do so much more."

Our award-winning Bodlondeb home now has an award-winning manager. Ann Chapman pioneered new levels of care for people with mental health problems and dementia.

Her work has been recognised with a Silver award in Wales' most prestigious care awards in the Excellence in Mental Health category.

After 30 years in the care sector, Ann feels "privileged" to be running a centre of excellence, her dream home for people with mental health problems and dementia.

Bodlondeb was opened by Assembly First Minister Carwyn Jones last year when he described it as a place which "raises the spirits when you come in."

Ann was honoured at the Wales Care Awards, staged in association with

Care Forum Wales.

She said: "I've been at Pendine for the last 12 years, however my professional links span over many years and I've thoroughly enjoyed it.

I love the way things develop and I've been given opportunities to have an input on the design of the centre of excellence, Bodlondeb.

"Bodlondeb is a top of the range unit for people with dementia and mental health problems, bringing together a complementary range of best practice. This field of care is the most challenging but the most rewarding.



It was an awards night with a silver lining – and a gold one.

Pendine Park activities manager Gerry Humphreys found herself nominated for not one but two awards at Wales Care Awards, the most prestigious awards for care professionals.

She was a gold winner in the Dignity in Care Award and silver recipient for the Promoting Fulfilled Lives Award.

"No one can be unhappy when Gerry is around" was how Malcolm Crosbie of Ruabon described Gerry when he nominated her.

As the husband of retired civil servant Audrey, 82, an Alzheimer sufferer and resident at Pendine's Highfield home, in Wrexham, he had seen her winning ways first hand and nominated her for the fulfilling lives

category.

"My strong belief is that just because someone is living in the care sector does not mean their social life should end," said Gerry.

She has set up a swimming club for residents, ladies go to ballet performances, some of the men go to football matches. There are visiting musicians and choirs.

"Of course you have ladies and gents who do not wish to join in everything. We all like some quiet time, and we respect that and perhaps read or just talk to them in their room," said Gerry.

"I was gobsmacked when I knew I was nominated, for someone to think that highly of you. I'm just doing what I'm meant to be doing, I believe that is why I'm here to try and fulfil the wishes of the residents and families."

About six years ago Gerry set up the family support group. "They like to say how they are feeling and at times they feel they are on their own, so it's important they share their feelings with others who are in the same position. Mr Crosbie said: "As a member of the relatives support group I've had the privilege and pleasure to work with Gerry towards the enhancement of the lives of residents.

"I have first-hand knowledge of her commitment and dedication and the effort she puts in, not only during her work hours, but also in her own time."



Awards double delight for Gerry

Labour of love wins award for Bev

Finding time for others brings its own rewards... and a silver award.

Beverly Millington loves her full-time job working as

a medical secretary in Wrexham Maelor Hospital for the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

But for the mother of two young children, she also loves going out working in her 'spare' time looking after others.

It is as a result of her part-time job as a care practitioner with Pendine Park Independent Living which provides care for those who need help to remain in their own homes, that she was a finalist in the care profession's most prestigious awards.

She was nominated in the supported living care practitioner category of the Wales Care Awards, sponsored jointly by ACT and Smartcare, and took the silver award.

It was looking after her grandparents which sparked Beverley's interest in the care profession.



The mother-of-two has been working for Pendine Park Independent Living since May 2009.

Bev said: "I always looked after my nan and granddad and when nan fell ill she went into a home. She always said I should have been a nurse but by then I had a mortgage and it required a big commitment and I could not afford to re-train, so I went to do this part-time and I loved it."

She studied at Yale College to be a medical secretary and has been with the hospital for 14 years.

Bev added: "I'm lucky, I'm not one of those people who do not like going to work, I love both my jobs, I love the variety.

"When I work as a carer I treat people the way I would want to be treated myself and the way I would expect my own family to be treated.

"I have been promoting person centred care plans and done a lot of work with clients to find out what they want from their care, not what we think they should have."

"I help look after anyone over the age of 18 and in an evening I get anything up to eight calls. It can involve a medication check, making cups of tea, welfare check, putting someone to bed, administering personal care."

Although she has given up her own time to study and acquire NVQ2 in health and social care and is about to be registered with Care Council Wales, Bev wants to continue with both jobs.

"People ask me how I manage and I don't know really, I just carry on." Fortunately husband Lee works factory shifts which mean he can help out and Beverley's mum also lends a hand.

Pendine Park Independent Living Manager Audra West nominated Bev. She said: "Bev has strived to improve the quality of the service. Aside from improving her practice through training and development she presents as a positive role model to her peers and customers."

Single mum Rebecca strikes gold

It started as a way to make holiday money, but now it's turned to gold.

Single mum Rebecca Griffiths, who works as a care practitioner in our Highfield home, turned her back on

a teaching career because she found caring for others so rewarding.

Now 'Becca has been rewarded, with a Gold at the Wales Care Awards which recognise the unsung heroes by rewarding the best in the caring professions.

'Becca won the residential care practitioner category.

She said: "In the last year of my degree I started working in a care home for a bit of money, but after a couple of weeks I really liked it.

"A major part of my role now is preparing person centred care plans. I sit and talk to the patient and their families, finding out about that person, what they used to do and what their

hobbies were, perhaps trying to get them interested in that hobby again.

"If I were in a home there are ways I would want to be treated, and that is the way I approach everyone else."

Becca has her NVQ 2 and 3 in care and Level 3 in customer services and has almost finished her assessor award which will enable her to assess candidates for the diploma in health and social care.

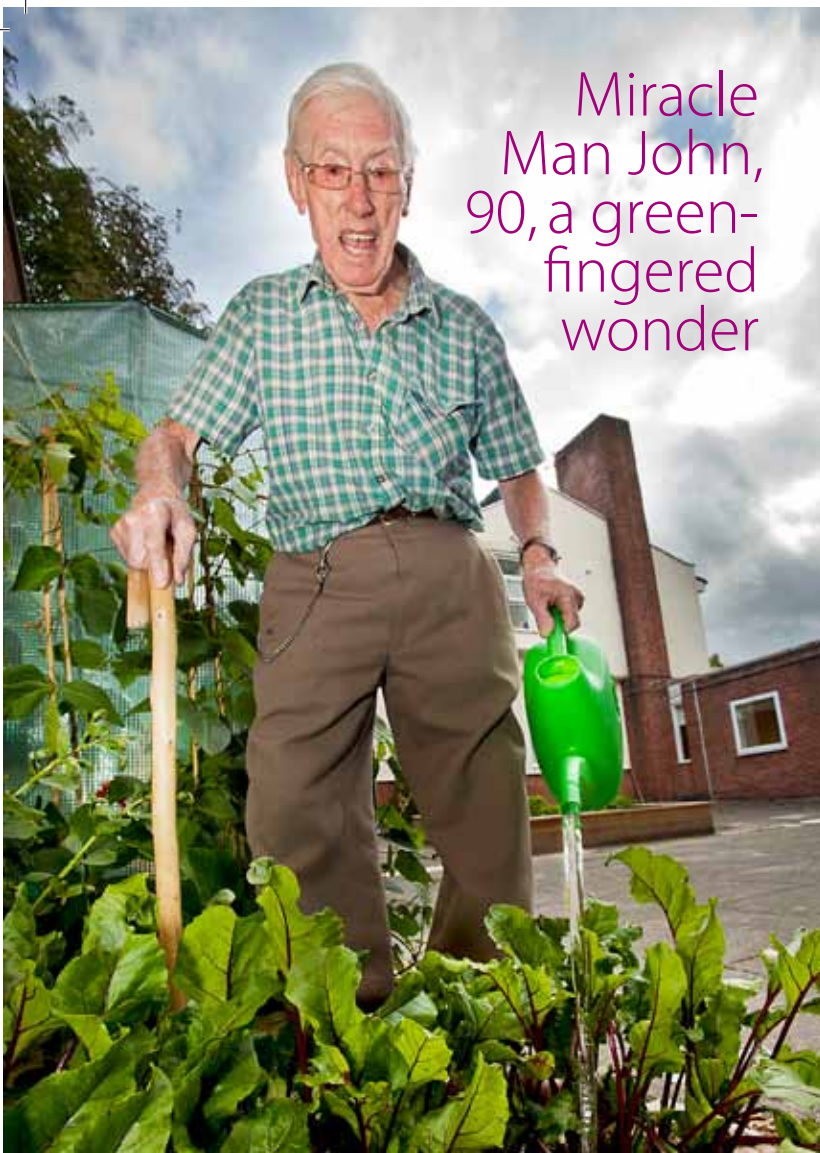
Becca took sister Hayley – also a Pendine employee at the Hillbury residential home – to the awards ceremony in Cardiff.

Her manager Tracey Smith, who nominated her, said: "Becca has proved herself to be motivated, committed and passionate and never fails to deliver high standards of care to all residents."



Rebecca Griffiths with manager Tracey Smith

Miracle Man John, 90, a green-fingered wonder



A ninety-year-old gardener has been hailed a "Miracle Man" after beating cancer.

Now the residents and staff at our Hillbury Care Home where John Pierce lives are tucking into freshly grown vegetables and salad thanks to his green fingers.

John is turning out a steady supply of just-picked fresh veg for the kitchens at Hillbury from the greenhouse that is his pride and joy.

He became a resident at Hillbury in 2007, but at that time was confined to a wheelchair following treatment for cancer.

Now, just a few years on, he is up and about and growing a host of vegetables, salad greens and tomatoes in his very own greenhouse provided by the manager, Cindy Clutton.

John is proud of the fact he's known at Hillbury Care Home as the "Miracle Man" but puts his good recovery down to the fact he's enjoying his gardening so much.

He said: "When I arrived here from the Wrexham Maelor Hospital I had just had an operation for my twisted bowel and couldn't move at all.

"But fair play, the nurses and staff here had me doing physio, which I have kept up with even today, and that made all the difference.

"Now I've grown marrows, tomatoes, lettuce and beans. I give some to the kitchen, so all the residents can have a taste and they go down a treat. I also give some to my two sons when they visit."

Cindy said: "It's the best thing we could have done because it's given him a new lease of life and it's clearly something he enjoys.

"John has definitely got that miracle green-fingered touch when it comes to gardening."

Helpful Susan is a real star

Even if she uses a wheelchair, Susan Mullally sees no reason to stop helping other people.

Although she has multiple sclerosis, Highfield resident Mrs Mullally will live as independent a life as she can.

Once a week Mrs Mullally volunteers to help out serving customers at the Food Co-operative set up in the Gwersyllt Community Resource Centre.

"Basically it's a local meeting place and anyone can turn up and put in an order for foodstuffs a week or so in advance and they are delivered to the centre where they can pick them up.

"I go once a week for about two to two and a half hours. I don't move very fast or independently but I manage serving behind the tables," she said. Mrs Mullally also helps register the names and details of shoppers so that the co-operative can work out what volumes of food to order.

Activities Co-ordinator Gerry Humphreys said: "Susan told me that she wanted to do more than she was already doing and I suggested perhaps she would like to volunteer.

"She liked the idea and now helps out at the food co-op once a week."

Born in Cornwall, Mrs Mullally moved about thanks to her father's military career and later with her ex-husband, until she found herself in North Wales.

She had completed secretarial training in London when she discovered she had the onset of MS. She has also done work



Susan Mullally with fellow volunteers, from left Eunice Curbishley, Elaine Roberts and Jackie White

training people for managerial positions.

"I kept working for a good while but then I could not get around or drive," said Mrs Mullally. About five years ago she decided she would need to enter a home and decided on Highfield.

"You can feel a bit useless at first so you need to develop a few interests to keep busy. We have a resident artist at Pendine and I discovered I could do calligraphy, which I'm interested in. I also like reading."